

**12-Person Jury**

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DOROTHY BROWN  
CIRCUIT CLERK  
COOK COUNTY, IL  
2019L009732

**IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF COOK COUNTY, ILLINOIS  
COUNTY DEPARTMENT, LAW DIVISION**

HELEN RAMOS,

Plaintiff,

v.

STERIGENICS U.S., LLC; BOB NOVAK;  
ROGER CLARK; and GTCR, LLC,

Defendants.

No. **2019L009732**

6430089

**PLAINTIFF DEMANDS TRIAL BY JURY**

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**COMPLAINT AT LAW**

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Plaintiff, HELEN RAMOS, by her attorneys, CAVANAGH LAW GROUP, complaining of defendants, STERIGENICS U.S. LLC (“Sterigenics”), BOB NOVAK, ROGER CLARK, and GTCR, LLC, states:

**INTRODUCTION**

For decades, tens of thousands of people have lived in the quiet suburbs of Cook and DuPage Counties—Willowbrook, Burr Ridge, Darien, and Hinsdale—with the false belief that they had found a sanctuary from the busy streets of Chicago. Just 25 miles southwest of the third largest city in America the area is a disaster zone. It is America’s Chernobyl. In 1984, a company called Sterigenics infiltrated the Willowbrook community and began emitting an invisible, cancer-causing toxin, ethylene oxide. In 2011, this company was purchased by a Cook County hedge fund, GTCR, LLC. The emissions continued. It was not until August 21, 2018, when the United States Department of Health & Human Services released a report, that the

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veil was finally lifted on the staggering cancer statistics and other ailments running rampant in these quiet communities. With the cancer-causing effects of ethylene oxide having been studied since the 1940s, America's Chernobyl has been nearly 80 years in the making and it affects our children, our parents, and our grandparents. This is about the children our community may never have, the lives cut short, the dreams destroyed, and the memories never made.

### OVERVIEW

1. Since 1984, Sterigenics has been emitting ethylene oxide (hereinafter "EtO"), a known carcinogen, into the air from its facility located in Willowbrook, Illinois. As a result, for the last 34 years, those who live and work in Willowbrook and the surrounding area have unknowingly been inhaling EtO in the air they breathe on a routine and continuous basis.

2. Sterigenics neither informed the residents of the Willowbrook community or those who live or work nearby that it systematically emits EtO into the air, nor warned residents that they were routinely and constantly breathing and are continuing to routinely and constantly breathe in a known carcinogen.

3. On or about August 21, 2018, an "Evaluation of Potential Health Impacts for Ethylene Oxide Emissions" prepared by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (hereinafter "ATSDR"), was released to the general public.<sup>1</sup> The ATSDR report was based upon

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/HAC/pha/sterigenic/Sterigenics\\_International\\_Inc-508.pdf](https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/HAC/pha/sterigenic/Sterigenics_International_Inc-508.pdf)

air measurements of EtO collected in May 2018 from 29 discrete locations near the Sterigenics facility in Willowbrook.

4. Relative to the Sterigenics facility in Willowbrook, the ATSDR concluded that “residents and workers are exposed to elevated airborne EtO concentrations from facility emissions.” The ATSDR further concluded that “***an elevated cancer risk exists*** for residents and off-site workers in the Willowbrook community surrounding the Sterigenics facility,” and that “[t]hese elevated risks ***present a public health hazard to these populations.***” Among other things, the ATSDR Evaluation “recommends that Sterigenics take ***immediate action*** to reduce EtO emissions at this facility.”

5. According to the EPA, the upper limit of acceptable cancer risk for airborne toxins, such as EtO, is 1 in ten thousand (or 100 in 1 million). In other words, according to the EPA, it “will generally presume that if the risk to that individual is no higher than approximately 1 in ten thousand, that risk level is considered acceptable. . . .”<sup>2</sup>

6. Based upon the EPA’s 2014 National Air Toxics Assessment, there are 106 census tracts in the United States with cancer risk scores greater than the acceptable limits. Most of those 106 tracts are located in “Cancer Alley,” which is a notorious area along the Mississippi River between Baton Rouge and New Orleans with numerous industrial plants.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.epa.gov/national-air-toxics-assessment/nata-frequent-questions>

7. According to the EPA's 2014 measurements, the immediate area in DuPage County surrounding the Sterigenics facility in Willowbrook, referred to as Tract 17043845902, has a cancer risk of 281.8075 in 1 million—which is nearly three times higher than the EPA's acceptable limits.

8. To put this into further context, the EPA's 2014 National Air Toxics Assessment documented cancer risks in 76,727 census tracts across the country. The Willowbrook Tract, 1704385902, has the highest cancer risk in Illinois and the nineteenth (19th) highest cancer risk in the United States. In other words, the Willowbrook Tract is in the top 99.98% tracts in terms of cancer risk in the country.

9. Figure 1, below, identifies the nineteen census tracts in the United States with the highest cancer risk. Twelve are located along Cancer Alley. Five tracts have sterilization plants, such as Sterigenics, that emit massive amounts of EtO. In fact, sterilization plants are almost entirely responsible for causing the extraordinarily high cancer risks in DuPage County, Illinois, Jefferson County, Colorado, and Lehigh County, Pennsylvania.

Figure 1

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1	State	EPA Region	County	FIPS	Tract	Population	Total Cancer Risk (per million)
2	LA	EPA Region 6	St. John the Baptist	22095	22095070800	2,537	1,505.1167
3	LA	EPA Region 6	St. Charles	22089	22089060100	1,937	808.7227
4	LA	EPA Region 6	St. John the Baptist	22095	22095070900	3,115	616.6193
5	PA	EPA Region 3	Lehigh	42077	42077005902	1,571	596.4609
6	CO	EPA Region 8	Jefferson	08059	08059010902	2,310	525.5596
7	LA	EPA Region 6	St. John the Baptist	22095	22095070700	4,348	511.3240
8	LA	EPA Region 6	St. John the Baptist	22095	22095071000	2,840	490.2785
9	LA	EPA Region 6	St. John the Baptist	22095	22095000000	45,924	413.3152
10	WV	EPA Region 3	Kanawha	54039	54039013400	2,222	366.6597
11	LA	EPA Region 6	St. John the Baptist	22095	22095071100	3,398	363.1912
12	TX	EPA Region 6	Harris	48201	48201343100	4,629	348.2016
13	PA	EPA Region 3	Lehigh	42077	42077000101	3,661	346.5181
14	LA	EPA Region 6	St. John the Baptist	22095	22095070500	6,229	329.2657
15	LA	EPA Region 6	St. John the Baptist	22095	22095070100	2,685	303.0079
16	LA	EPA Region 6	St. John the Baptist	22095	22095070300	6,258	296.3112
17	TX	EPA Region 6	Harris	48201	48201343200	4,944	296.1831
18	LA	EPA Region 6	St. John the Baptist	22095	22095070400	4,381	286.5417
19	LA	EPA Region 6	St. Charles	22089	22089062700	4,753	284.5145
20	IL	EPA Region 5	DuPage	17043	17043845902	3,411	281.8075

10. With respect to the Willowbrook Tract, 88.98% of the elevated cancer risk is attributed to EtO emissions; and the only facility in the Willowbrook Tract emitting EtO is Sterigenics. As a result, Sterigenics alone is almost entirely responsible for the Willowbrook Tract having the 19th highest cancer risk in the country.

11. Only one facility in the entire country emits more EtO than the Sterigenics facility in Willowbrook.

12. The data cited in Paragraphs 6 through 11, above, is based on sampling from 2014. However, more recent data reveals that the cancer risk in Willowbrook is far higher than previously determined. In May 2018, air samples were taken and analyzed from the area surrounding the Sterigenics facility in Willowbrook. Those

samples revealed a **current** cancer risk of 6,400 in 1 million (or 64 in 10 thousand), which is **64 times the acceptable limit**.

13. As a direct and proximate result of Sterigenics' emissions of EtO over the course of the last 34 years, the Willowbrook community has become one of the most toxic and one of the most dangerous communities from a health and well-being standpoint in the entire country. Those who live and work in the Willowbrook area have been victimized by Sterigenics' negligent acts and omissions, as well as its conscious disregard and utter indifference to human life and the health and well-being of those in the community.

14. According to U.S. EPA's website,<sup>3</sup> for a single year of exposure to EtO, the cancer risk is greater for children than for adults. This elevated risk to children exists because EtO can damage DNA and children have more years ahead of them to develop the other cancer risk factors that result in the formation of malignant cells. Additionally, compared to adults, children receive larger doses per body weight because they have greater lung surface area and increased lung volume per body weight, and breathe in more air per body weight.

15. According to 2010 U.S. Census Data, 3,494 children 5 years and younger lived within 3 miles of the Sterigenics facility in 2010, including 250 that lived within 1 mile.

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<sup>3</sup> Available at <https://www.epa.gov/hazardous-air-pollutants-ethylene-oxide/frequent-questions-ethylene-oxide> (accessed on October 18, 2018).

16. Neither the extent of Sterigenics' EtO emissions nor the impact of those emissions on the health and well-being of those who live and work in the Willowbrook area was known by the general public until the August 21, 2018 release of the ATSDR report and the August 22, 2018 release of EPA's 2014 National Air Toxics Assessment.

17. On February 15, 2019, the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) issued a sealed order "to prevent the commencement of any new sterilization cycles using ethylene oxide until measures are in place to prevent emissions of ethylene oxide that contribute to ambient levels of ethylene oxide which present a public health hazard to residents and off-site workers in the Willowbrook community."

### **PARTIES**

18. This is an Illinois action. It is brought on behalf of Illinois citizens, for injuries that occurred in Illinois, as a result of ongoing negligence that took place in Illinois. All of the actions that caused Plaintiff's injuries were a direct result of actions orchestrated by an entity managed out of Illinois, Sterigenics, U.S., LLC, which is now overseen by another Illinois entity, GTCR, LLC.

19. Plaintiff, HELEN RAMOS, was diagnosed with lymphoma in 2012 at 65 years old. Since 1992, HELEN RAMOS has lived less than 2.5 miles from the Sterigenics facility in Willowbrook, Illinois. Since the lymphoma diagnosis, HELEN RAMOS was subsequently diagnosed with leukemia. All of HELEN RAMOS' treatment for leukemia has occurred in Cook County, Illinois.

20. Plaintiff did not have notice that HELEN RAMOS' medical condition was wrongfully caused or that it was caused by Sterigenics' emissions of EtO until the recent ATSDR report was released in August 2018.

21. Defendant Sterigenics U.S., LLC is a limited liability company organized under the laws of Delaware and having its headquarters and principal place of business at 2015 Spring Road, Suite 650, Oak Brook, Illinois 60523. Sterigenics U.S., LLC did and continues to conduct substantial business in Cook County, Illinois.

22. Sterigenics U.S., LLC, is a subsidiary of Sotera Health LLC, previously named Sterigenics International, Inc.

23. In 2011, Sterigenics International LLC was purchased for \$675 million by the Chicago-based private equity firm, GTCR, LLC (hereinafter "GTCR"). From 2011 until the present, GTCR, with its principal place of business at 300 N. LaSalle Street, Suite 5600, Chicago, Cook County, IL, owned, operated, managed, and/or maintained Sterigenics. The Chairman of GTCR in 2011 was Governor Bruce Rauner. GTCR did and continues to conduct substantial business in Cook County, Illinois.

24. In 2017, Sterigenics International LLC announced that it had changed its parent company name to Sotera Health LLC.

25. The core of GTCR's investment strategy is—as repeated frequently on its website and other promotional material—"finding and partnering with

management leaders in core domains to identify, acquire and build market-leading companies through transformational acquisitions and organic growth.”<sup>4</sup>

26. GTCR’s approach of “creating partnerships with exceptional leaders” is so fundamental to its business that GTCR has trademarked “The Leaders Strategy” to describe its collaborative approach to investing in companies.<sup>5</sup>

27. GTCR has described its involvement with Sterigenics as a partnership from the beginning: “As part of the Sterigenics transaction, GTCR partnered with Michael Mulhern, who joined as CEO shortly after closing. Together, GTCR and Mr. Mulhern identified several initiatives to improve Sterigenics’ operational and growth initiatives, enhance its market leadership and drive incremental earnings growth.”<sup>6</sup> GTCR’s close relationship with Sterigenics has also frequently been mentioned in GTCR’s own material<sup>7</sup> and in the media.<sup>8</sup>

28. A video featured prominently on GTCR’s website homepage at <https://www.gtc.com/> further highlights the integrated nature of GTCR’s relationship with Sterigenics. In the video, which is transcribed below, GTCR Managing Director Dean Mihas and the then-CEO of Sterigenics discuss GTCR’s significant involvement in and control over Sterigenics:

MIHAS (GTCR Managing Director): We believe very strongly at GTCR that domain expertise is pretty critical.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.gtc.com/the-leaders-strategy/>

<sup>5</sup> *Id.*

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.gtc.com/leadership-stories/sterigenics-transformation-through-organic-growth-and-strategic-acquisitions/>

<sup>7</sup> See, e.g., <https://www.gtc.com/gtc-closes-the-acquisition-of-sterigenics-international-inc/>

<sup>8</sup> See, e.g., <https://www.pehub.com/2011/03/gtc-completes-sterigenics-buy/>

MULHERN (Sterigenics then-CEO): When you combine that knowledge, that analysis, prudent risk-taking, I think that leads to – has the potential to lead to – great health outcomes.

MIHAS: Take the healthcare group in particular. We spent a lot of time doing proactive research, picking niches within the healthcare industry, to explore, to really understand the trends.

MULHERN: The amount of diligence they do to really understand a sector, the companies within the sector, the management teams, is unlike anything I've seen.

MIHAS: It was probably a year before we even acquired Sterigenics that we started digging around the contract sterilization space, trying to understand who the key companies are, who the leaders are, what the industry growth profile looks like, how large it is.

MULHERN: It came to our knowledge that a company was about to come to market to be sold. If that company got into the wrong hands, it would put at risk our source of supply. GTCR just kicked it into high gear and said we must own this asset, and today we're the only vertically integrated sterilization company in the world and in large part because GTCR made the decision and committed the resources to get it done.

MIHAS: So there's a lot of effort and R&D really that goes into having this domain expertise. It's not just about working on a deal when it comes in.

MULHERN: Beyond the obvious, which is that they're extremely talented at what they do, I have enormous trust in them. And I think trust is a critical part when you partner with a private equity firm.

29. GTCR's partnership with Sterigenics also included playing an active role in expanding Sterigenics' geographic footprint: "In addition to organic initiatives,

GTCR and management also strategically repositioned the business through three acquisitions, including two sterilization facility add-ons and the transformative acquisition of Nordion, a key supplier to Sterigenics.”<sup>9</sup>

30. The close partnership between GTCR and Sterigenics is also reflected in GTCR’s substantial involvement on Sterigenics’ board of directors. According to GTCR’s website, at least four of its ten managing directors currently serve, or have served, on the board of directors of Sterigenics or Sotera.<sup>10</sup>

31. Publicly available documents reveal that principals of GTCR, acting in their capacity as members of the board of directors of Sterigenics, have been actively involved in Sterigenics acquisition of other companies.<sup>11</sup>

32. Upon information and belief, Defendant Bob Novak is an individual who resides the state of Illinois. Novak is the Operations Manager at the Sterigenics facility in Willowbrook, and has worked in that capacity since August 2003. He is responsible for the operation of the facility, coordinating and overseeing all activities in plant operations, and overall plant safety.

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<sup>9</sup> <https://www.gtcr.com/leadership-stories/sterigenics-transformation-through-organic-growth-and-strategic-acquisitions/>

<sup>10</sup> See <https://www.gtcr.com/team-member/sean-l-cunningham/>; <https://www.gtcr.com/gtcr-promotes-aaron-d-cohen-and-sean-l-cunningham-to-principal/>; <https://www.gtcr.com/team-member/benjamin-j-daverman/>; <https://www.bloomberg.com/research/stocks/private/person.asp?personId=66077&privcapId=20801>; <https://www.gtcr.com/team-member/david-a-donnini/>; <https://www.bloomberg.com/research/stocks/private/person.asp?personId=1155789&privcapId=20801>; <https://www.gtcr.com/team-member/constantine-s-mihas/>

<sup>11</sup> <http://news.nordion.com/mobile.view?c=68761&v=202&d=3&id=aHR0cDovL2FwaS50ZW5rd2l6YXJkLmNvbS9maWxpbnmcueG1sP2lwYWdlPTk1NTE5NzMmRFNFUT0yJlNFUT0mU1FERVNDPVNFQ1RJT05fRVhISUJJVCZleHA9JnN1YnNpZD01Nw%3D%3D>

33. Defendant Roger Clark is an individual who resides in Chicago, Cook County, Illinois. Clark was the Maintenance Supervisor at the Sterigenics facility in Willowbrook and held that position for nearly 30 years from the late 1980s until approximately 2015. He was responsible for calibrating the internal EtO monitors and overseeing the maintenance activities at the Sterigenics' facility.

### **VILLAGE OF WILLOWBROOK**

34. The Village of Willowbrook is a suburban community located roughly 20 miles southwest of Chicago. Its population is approximately 8,500. The Village owns and operates over 54 acres of parks on 10 separate sites throughout the Village.

35. Sterigenics operates two buildings in Willowbrook. Building One is located at 7775 S. Quincy Street and Building Two is located at 830 Midway Drive. Upon information and belief, Sterigenics operated a third building at 7827 Quincy Street for a brief period of time.

36. During the times relevant for the time period referenced herein, Sterigenics operated another facility at 711 Cooper Court, Schaumburg, Cook County, Illinois.

37. The three Sterigenics buildings in Willowbrook are all located in a densely populated metropolitan area with 19,271 people living within one mile.

38. Gower Middle School in Burr Ridge is located 0.7 miles from the Sterigenics facility and has an enrollment of approximately 400 students. Gower West Elementary School is 0.9 miles from the Sterigenics facility. Conev's Cradle Infant Care, Inc., is a daycare center located 0.7 miles from the Sterigenics facility.

Hinsdale South High School, with an enrollment of 1,500 students, is located 1.1 miles from the Sterigenics facility.

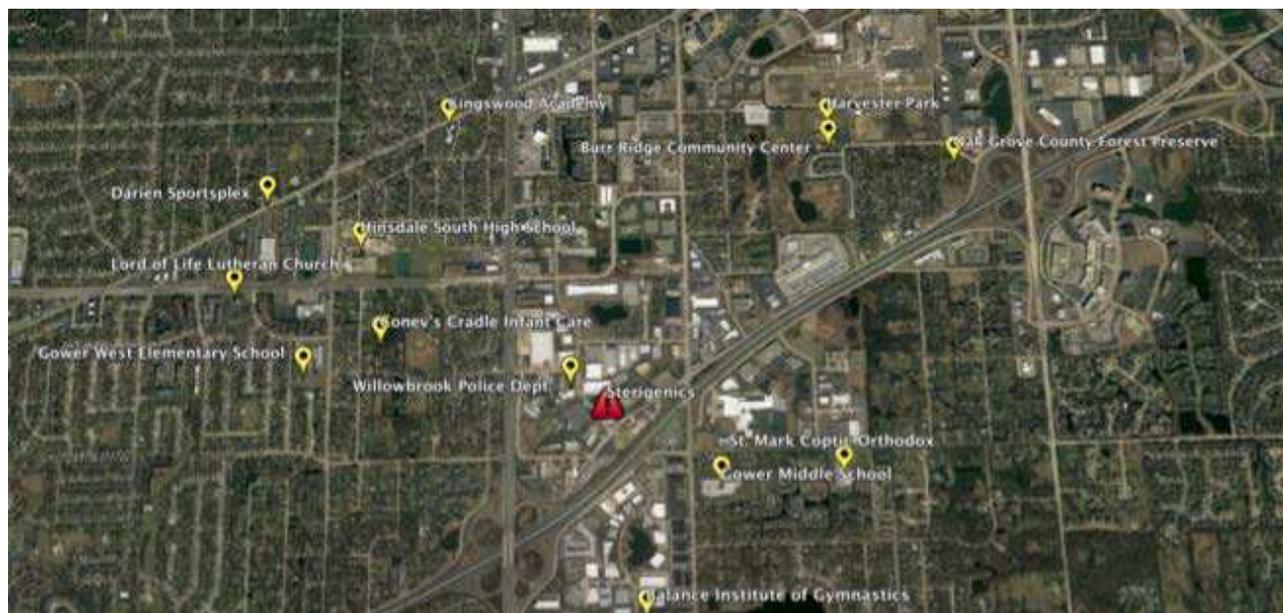
39. The Willowbrook Police Department, with its 23 full-time sworn police officers and three civilian employees, is located a mere 495 feet from the Sterigenics facility. Willowbrook's Village Office and City Hall is located 0.2 miles from the Sterigenics facility.

40. The Willowbrook Community Park is 0.6 miles from the Sterigenics facility. And there are highly dense residential areas to the immediate west of the Sterigenics facility within 0.3 miles, to the southeast within 0.6 miles, to the southwest within 0.9 miles, to the north within 0.7 miles, to the northeast within 0.8 miles, and to the east within 1.0 mile.

41. Willowbrook Town Center, which is located 1.1 miles from the Sterigenics facility, has nearly 200,000 square feet of retail stores, restaurants, and other businesses. There are 91,000 residents within a three-mile radius of the Willowbrook Town Center, and an additional 33,000 people employed in the area's 3,000-plus businesses.

42. Figure 2, below, depicts the area within a 1.5 mile radius of the Sterigenics facility.

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**Figure 2**

### **ETHYLENE OXIDE**

43. The DNA-damaging properties of EtO have been studied since the 1940s, and for more than 40 years it has been consistently recognized as dangerous, toxic, and carcinogenic.

44. In a 1977 report, the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (hereinafter “NIOSH”) concluded that occupational exposure to EtO may increase the frequency of genetic mutations in human populations and recommended that EtO be considered as mutagenic and potentially carcinogenic to humans. Given EtO’s carcinogenic potential, the 1977 NIOSH report also recommended that alternative sterilization processes be used whenever available.

45. In 1981, NIOSH released a new bulletin focusing on new evidence of carcinogenic, mutagenic, and reproductive hazards associated with EtO. It also reiterated that EtO was a potential occupational carcinogen and reported that no safe levels of EtO exposure have been demonstrated.

46. In 1985, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services published the Fourth Annual Report on Carcinogens and classified EtO as reasonably anticipated to be a human carcinogen.

47. In 1987, the state of California (home to two Sterigenics EtO sterilizing plants) officially designated EtO a carcinogen.

48. In the early 1990s, the first high quality, long-term research on ethylene oxide's carcinogenic impacts on humans was published. This research was undertaken based on a NIOSH study tracking the mortality of 18,254 U.S. workers who had been exposed to EtO between the 1940s and 1980s at sterilizer plants much like the Sterigenics facility in Willowbrook, Illinois. In fact, according to Kathleen Hoffman the NIOSH study actually included a few Sterigenics facilities.<sup>12</sup> The NIOSH study ultimately found causal links between exposure to EtO and increased mortality from lymphatic, hematopoietic, and breast cancers. The research on the NIOSH study has since been heavily cited and relied upon by major regulatory organizations, including the World Health Organization (hereinafter "WHO") and the United States Environmental Protection Agency (hereinafter "EPA").

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<sup>12</sup> [https://yosemite.epa.gov/Sab/Sabproduct.nsf/B839FA45582C200185257D9500496B0E/\\$File/EPA-Sterigenics+Speaking+Points+for+IRIS+SAB+Review-Nov+2014.pdf](https://yosemite.epa.gov/Sab/Sabproduct.nsf/B839FA45582C200185257D9500496B0E/$File/EPA-Sterigenics+Speaking+Points+for+IRIS+SAB+Review-Nov+2014.pdf) accessed 9.25.2018.

49. In 1994 the WHO's International Agency for Research on Cancer (hereinafter "IARC") listed EtO as a Group 1 human carcinogen, the agency's highest risk classification, finding "Ethylene Oxide is carcinogenic to humans."

50. In 2000, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services published the Ninth Annual Report on Carcinogens and revised its classification for EtO to known to be a human carcinogen.

51. The U.S. Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration (hereinafter "OSHA") 2002 fact sheet on EtO indicates that "[b]oth human and animal studies show that EtO is a carcinogen" and requires employers to provide clear signs and labels notifying workers of EtO's "carcinogenic and reproductive hazards."<sup>13</sup>

52. In 2016, the EPA's Integrated Risk Information System (hereinafter "IRIS") reclassified EtO as "carcinogenic to humans," and increased the cancer potency of EtO by 30 times.

53. The half-life of EtO in the atmosphere has been reported in certain circumstances to be two-hundred eleven (211) days. Neither rain nor absorption into aqueous aerosols is capable of removing ethylene oxide from the atmosphere.

54. Acute exposure to EtO can result in nausea, vomiting, neurological disorders, bronchitis, pulmonary edema, and emphysema.

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<sup>13</sup> [https://www.osha.gov/OshDoc/data\\_General\\_Facts/ethylene-oxide-factsheet.pdf](https://www.osha.gov/OshDoc/data_General_Facts/ethylene-oxide-factsheet.pdf) accessed 9.25.2018.

55. Chronic exposure to EtO can irritate the eyes, skin, nose, throat, lungs, and can cause harm to the brain and nervous system leading to headaches, nausea, memory loss, and numbness.

56. Chronic inhalation exposure to EtO can also cause reproductive and developmental impairments. Evidence recognized by the EPA indicates that inhalation exposure to EtO can cause an increased rate of miscarriages in females. Evidence also indicates that EtO inhalation exposure can cause decreased sperm concentration and testicular degeneration in males.

57. Additionally, inhalation exposure to EtO can cause mutations and chromosomal damage that can lead to birth defects and cancer. Even when exposure to EtO diminishes or ceases, the frequency of sister chromatid exchanges (mutations/chromosomal alterations) have been found to remain elevated for at least six months.

58. Chronic inhalation exposure to EtO also causes cancer. Evidence recognized by the EPA indicates that inhalation exposure to EtO causes various cancers including but not limited to lymphatic cancers, leukemia, and breast cancer. There is also evidence that EtO causes tumors in the body and reproductive issues in both men and women, as well as birth defects. **As a result, the EPA has concluded that EtO is carcinogenic to humans by the inhalation route of exposure.** The stated confidence in this classification is “HIGH.”

## STERIGENICS' OPERATIONS

59. Sterigenics has been releasing EtO into the air in the Willowbrook area since 1984. The facility stores EtO and sprays it into gas chambers to sterilize medical equipment and pharmaceuticals. Building One of the Sterigenics facility, which was constructed in 1984, holds fifteen gas chambers, while Building Two, which was constructed in 1999, holds four gas chambers which were built in 1999 and 2012. Upon information and belief, there were periods of time where no pollution controls were in place. Additionally, even where there have been certain pollution controls in place, they have been ineffective and/or lacking due to the acts and omissions of the defendants. Further, upon information and belief, some ethylene oxide used by Sterigenics does not go through any pollution control but rather is emitted into the air through back vents.

60. The Sterigenics facility operates 24 hours per day, which means toxic, cancerous gas is emitted from the Sterigenics facility on a steady and continuous basis. As a result, EtO is a constant element in the air breathed by those who live and work near the Willowbrook facility.

61. From 1995 through 2016, the reported EtO emissions from the Sterigenics facility are depicted in Figure 3, below:

**Figure 3**

Year	Pounds	Year	Pounds
1995	18,213 lbs.	2006	3,985 lbs.
1996	22,000 lbs.	2007	3,698 lbs.
1997	26,000 lbs.	2008	3,597 lbs.
1998	31,000 lbs.	2009	3,429 lbs.
1999	1,440 lbs.	2010	6,869 lbs.
2000	7,341 lbs.	2011	6,878 lbs.
2001	7,848 lbs.	2012	6,811 lbs.
2002	6,686 lbs.	2013	5,892 lbs.
2003	6,630 lbs.	2014	5,036 lbs.
2004	5,039 lbs.	2015	4,706 lbs.
2005	2,621 lbs.	2016	4,009 lbs.

62. No data on ambient air emissions was kept before 1995. However, the ATSDR notes that the available data suggest that “substantially higher ambient releases prior to 1995 were likely.” Indeed, a lone 1988 report on Sterigenics’ Willowbrook facility’s EtO emissions accessed through the EPA’s TRI Explorer Database supports this contention.<sup>14</sup> The 1988 report indicates that the Willowbrook facility emitted 97,518 pounds of EtO into the air.<sup>15</sup> This is over three times greater than the highest amount recorded in the contiguous 1995-2016 data set (32,200

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<sup>14</sup>

[https://iaspub.epa.gov/triexplorer/release\\_trends?tri=60521GRFFT7775Q&p\\_view=TRYR&trilib=TRIQ1&sort=\\_V IEW &sort\\_fmt=1&state=All+states&county=All+counties&chemical=000075218&industry=ALL&core\\_year=&t ab\\_rpt=1&FLD=AIRLBY&FLD=E1&FLD=E2&FLD=E3&FLD=E4&FLD=E41&FLD=E42&FLD=E5&FLD=E5 2&FLD=E53&FLD=E53A&FLD=E53B&FLD=E54&FLD=E51&FLD=E51A&FLD=E51B&FLD=TSFDSP&FLD =m10&FLD=m41&FLD=m62&FLD=potwmet1&FLD=m71&FLD=m81&FLD=m82&FLD=m72&FLD=m63&FL D=m64&FLD=m65&FLD=m66&FLD=m67&FLD=m73&FLD=m79&FLD=m90&FLD=m94&FLD=m99&FLD= RELLBY](https://iaspub.epa.gov/triexplorer/release_trends?tri=60521GRFFT7775Q&p_view=TRYR&trilib=TRIQ1&sort=_V IEW &sort_fmt=1&state=All+states&county=All+counties&chemical=000075218&industry=ALL&core_year=&t ab_rpt=1&FLD=AIRLBY&FLD=E1&FLD=E2&FLD=E3&FLD=E4&FLD=E41&FLD=E42&FLD=E5&FLD=E5 2&FLD=E53&FLD=E53A&FLD=E53B&FLD=E54&FLD=E51&FLD=E51A&FLD=E51B&FLD=TSFDSP&FLD =m10&FLD=m41&FLD=m62&FLD=potwmet1&FLD=m71&FLD=m81&FLD=m82&FLD=m72&FLD=m63&FL D=m64&FLD=m65&FLD=m66&FLD=m67&FLD=m73&FLD=m79&FLD=m90&FLD=m94&FLD=m99&FLD= RELLBY)

<sup>15</sup>

[https://ofmpub.epa.gov/enviro/tri\\_formr\\_partone\\_v2.get\\_thisone?rpt\\_year=1988&dcn\\_num=1388025024213&ban flag=Y](https://ofmpub.epa.gov/enviro/tri_formr_partone_v2.get_thisone?rpt_year=1988&dcn_num=1388025024213&ban flag=Y)

pounds in 1998) and over 20 times greater than emissions levels in 2016 (4,205 pounds).

63. Without discovery from Sterigenics, it is impossible to know precisely how many pounds of EtO Sterigenics released into the air from 1984 to 1994, but it is reasonable to infer that the pre-1995 emissions of EtO were at best, similar to those from 1995 to 1998, and at worst, closer to the colossal emissions in 1988.

64. Notably, the historical EPA emission reports from the Willowbrook Sterigenics facility demonstrate that the amounts of EtO released from the plant over the last decade are significantly lower than the amounts released during prior decades. Total air releases in the 1990s were up to **7.7 times higher** than present levels. Sterigenics' EtO releases in the 1980s were even higher than this, with available data suggesting that Sterigenics released **over 20 times more** EtO into the air in 1988 than it did in 2016, the most recent date for which emissions data is publicly available. As a result, the ATSDR report's current estimate of Willowbrook area residents' cancer risk (which is based on sampling conducted this year) must drastically underestimate of the levels of risk faced by those exposed to the Sterigenics facility's emissions in the 1980s and 1990s

65. Sterigenics' air emissions were not the only manner in which Sterigenics exposed area residents, workers, and students to EtO. Sterigenics reported at least one mass "uncontrolled release" of EtO. On or about October 7, 2013, Sterigenics released ethylene glycol (a byproduct of EtO) into the soil and groundwater at its Willowbrook facility. In addition, on October 21, 2013, Sterigenics reported the

uncontrolled release of 30 pounds of ethylene oxide into the air from its Willowbrook facility. The Illinois Attorney General filed a lawsuit against Sterigenics for its water and air pollution and alleged numerous violations of environmental statutes and regulations. Sterigenics entered into a consent order whereby it agreed to pay a \$50,000.00 fine.

66. Upon information and belief, Sterigenics also released ethylene glycol into the soil and groundwater at its Willowbrook facility on a regular and continuing basis via drain pits that collected excess ethylene glycol from the EtO chambers.

67. At all relevant times, Sterigenics knew or should have known that EtO is toxic and dangerous to human health and well-being. In addition, at all relevant times, Sterigenics knew or should have known that EtO is classified as a carcinogen and has been determined to cause various illnesses and ailments including, but not limited to, cancer.

68. Notwithstanding Sterigenics' knowledge concerning the dangers of operation, it has been emitting EtO from its facility in Willowbrook on a routine and constant basis for 34 years. Further, notwithstanding Sterigenics' knowledge that chronic inhalation exposure to EtO causes adverse conditions to the eyes, skin, nose, throat, lungs, and nervous system, reproductive and developmental impairments, mutations, chromosomal damage, birth defects, and cancer, it has failed to warn those who live and work in the Willowbrook area that they are being exposed to and breathing in EtO on a routine and constant basis.

## STERIGENICS' PATTERN OF BEHAVIOR

69. Sterigenics has been the subject of regulatory and administrative enforcement relative to its EtO emissions in Europe. Beginning in 1992, Sterigenics operated a sterilization facility in Zoetermeer, a city in the western Netherlands. The Zoetermeer facility was located in an area with residential housing and numerous small business. In 2009, it was determined that Sterigenics had been knowingly releasing amounts of EtO that exceeded the local Maximum Permissible Risk concentration into the air for a number of years and was penalized. Sterigenics, however, continued with its excessive emissions until it ultimately relocated its facility in 2010. According to the Public Prosecutor in Zoetermeer, Sterigenics knew of the unauthorized emissions, but failed to act and did not warn local residents about the emissions or the dangers associated therewith.

70. Sterigenics has also exhibited a pattern of neglecting safety in its facilities in the U.S. Sterigenics failed to properly train employees in the safe use of EtO at its sterilizing plant in Ontario, California, which resulted in a major EtO explosion on August 19, 2004 that injured four employees and forced the evacuation of the plant and neighboring facilities. The U.S. Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board (hereinafter "CSB") investigation into the incident found that Sterigenics had failed to ensure its maintenance employees understood the hazards associated with EtO-based processes, which led them to manually override safety devices, causing the explosion. The CSB faulted Sterigenics management for not implementing "company-wide engineering control recommendations that could have

prevented this explosion” and failing to follow recommendations on EtO concentrations disseminated by NIOSH.

71. Further evidencing Sterigenics’ disregard for safety, OSHA records show that Sterigenics has paid thousands of dollars in fines for safety violations at its Willowbrook facility.<sup>16</sup> Specifically, Sterigenics paid \$5,062 in fines in 2006 for several “Serious” violations that left workers exposed to unspecified “highly hazardous chemicals.”<sup>17</sup> Given the work undertaken at the Willowbrook facility, these “highly hazardous chemicals” likely included EtO.

72. Current and former Sterigenics employees have also raised concerns about company safety practices around EtO. For instance, on the company’s Glassdoor page, one former employee noted on June 25, 2013 that “[t]here is a minimum attention to quality & safety which will backfire eventually.”<sup>18</sup> Another stated on October 9, 2015 that “you’re working with Ethylene Oxide which is extremely dangerous and the company seems to cut corners around safety at times.”<sup>19</sup> Perhaps most concerning, an “EtO A Operator” in the Charlotte, North Carolina facility reported on February 24, 2015 that “Safety is an issue sometimes regarding procedures. The maintenance team cuts a lot of corners.” This employee advised management to “Lock out the overrides for equipment. Fire any maintenance manager that shows operators how to manually operate equipment without it

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<sup>16</sup> E.g. [https://www.osha.gov/pls/imis/establishment.inspection\\_detail?id=308153717](https://www.osha.gov/pls/imis/establishment.inspection_detail?id=308153717) accessed 9.25.2018.

<sup>17</sup> [https://www.osha.gov/pls/imis/establishment.inspection\\_detail?id=308153717](https://www.osha.gov/pls/imis/establishment.inspection_detail?id=308153717) & [https://www.osha.gov/pls/imis/establishment.violation\\_detail?id=308153717&citation\\_id=01001](https://www.osha.gov/pls/imis/establishment.violation_detail?id=308153717&citation_id=01001) accessed 9.25.2018.

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.glassdoor.com/Reviews/Employee-Review-Sterigenics-RVW2768416.htm> accessed 9.25.2018.

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.glassdoor.com/Reviews/Employee-Review-Sterigenics-RVW8236300.htm> accessed 9.25.2018.

showing on the computer system.”<sup>20</sup> Notably, this comment comes after the 2004 Ontario, California explosion. As discussed above, the CSB identified maintenance cutting corners and manually overriding equipment as factors leading to that incident. This employee review suggests that the safety and management failures that caused the California explosion were not addressed system-wide and continued to be in evidence at other Sterigenics facilities over a decade later.

73. Taken together, these elements demonstrate a pattern of Sterigenics consistently failing to implement company-wide safety measures across all its facilities, despite research, NIOSH bulletins, regulatory interventions, and problematic incidents demonstrating their need. This willingness to “cut corners” and lack of oversight may explain why Sterigenics failed for decades to install emission mitigation technology to limit passive venting of EtO from its Willowbrook facility.

**COUNT I**  
**Negligence – Sterigenics U.S., LLC**

74. Plaintiff incorporates by reference all allegations contained in Paragraphs 1 through 73 as if fully set forth herein.

75. Sterigenics U.S., LLC owned and operated the Sterigenics facility in Willowbrook, Illinois, during a material portion of time since 1984.

76. Sterigenics U.S., LLC managed, controlled, and supervised sterilization operations at the Sterigenics facility in Willowbrook, Illinois, during a material portion of time since 1984.

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<sup>20</sup> <https://www.glassdoor.com/Reviews/Employee-Review-Sterigenics-RVW5987616.htm> accessed 9.25.2018.

77. Sterigenics U.S., LLC had and continues to have a duty to exercise ordinary care for the health, safety, and well-being of Plaintiff and those living and working in the area surrounding its Willowbrook facility.

78. At all relevant times, Sterigenics U.S., LLC knew or should have known that the EtO gas emitting from its Willowbrook facility would have a toxic, poisonous, and highly deleterious effect upon the health, safety, and well-being of persons breathing it.

79. Sterigenics U.S., LLC breached its duty and failed to exercise ordinary care of the health and well-being of Plaintiff in one or more of the following ways:

- a. By emitting EtO into the air from its Willowbrook facility;
- b. By emitting excessive, unnecessary, and/or dangerous volumes of EtO into air from its Willowbrook facility;
- c. By using EtO as part of its sterilization process when safer alternatives could accomplish the same or similar business purpose without presenting the same level of risk to human health and well-being;
- d. By placing its own economic interests above the health and well-being of those who live or work in the Willowbrook community;
- e. By failing to warn or advise Plaintiff, as well as those who live or work in the Willowbrook community, that they were being exposed to EtO;
- f. By failing to warn or advise Plaintiff, as well as those who live or work in the Willowbrook community, that they were breathing in EtO;
- g. By failing to warn or advise Plaintiff, as well as those who live or work in the Willowbrook community, that it was emitting a known carcinogen into the air from its facility in Willowbrook;

- h. By failing to employ safe methods to adequately control, reduce, minimize, and/or mitigate EtO emissions from its Willowbrook facility;
- i. By failing to adequately study and test the effect of its EtO emissions from its Willowbrook facility on the quality of air;
- j. By failing to adequately study and test the effect of its EtO emissions from its Willowbrook facility on the health and well-being of those who live and work in the Willowbrook community; and
- k. By subjecting Plaintiff and those who live and work nearby its Willowbrook facility to an elevated cancer risk.

80. As a direct and proximate result of one or more of the foregoing acts or omissions, Plaintiff was exposed to and inhaled great amounts of EtO while living in the Willowbrook community.

81. As a direct and proximate result of Plaintiff's inhalation of EtO from the Sterigenics facility, she developed various medical conditions which have caused and will continue to cause Plaintiff to incur and endure medical bills, lost wages, pain and suffering, mental anguish, disability, disfigurement, reduced life expectancy, and loss of normal life.

WHEREFORE Plaintiff, HELEN RAMOS, respectfully requests that judgment be entered in her favor and against Sterigenics U.S., LLC in an amount to be determined by a trier of fact.

**COUNT II**  
**Negligent Training – Sterigenics U.S., LLC**

82. Plaintiff incorporates by reference all allegations contained in Paragraphs 1 through 73 as if fully set forth herein.

83. Sterigenics U.S., LLC had and continues to have a duty to properly train its employees to control and dispose of hazardous substances including EtO and its byproducts, including but not limited to ethylene glycol.

84. At all relevant times, Sterigenics U.S., LLC knew or should have known that failing to properly train its employees to control, monitor, and dispose of hazardous materials would have a toxic, poisonous, and highly deleterious effect upon the health, safety, and well-being of persons breathing it.

85. Sterigenics U.S., LLC breached its duty to properly train its employees in one or more of the following ways:

- a. By failing to train its employees about the carcinogenic effects of EtO;
- b. By failing to train its employees about the proper procedures to control and store EtO and its byproducts, including but not limited to ethylene glycol, such that it would prevent unintended leaks, spills or emissions;
- c. By failing to train its employees about the proper procedures to monitor EtO emissions;
- d. By failing to train its employees about the proper procedures for recording EtO emissions;
- e. By failing to train its employees about the proper procedures to adequately control, reduce, minimize, and/or mitigate EtO emissions from its Willowbrook facility;
- f. By failing to train its employees about the proper procedures for repairing and/or replacing defective EtO emissions equipment;
- g. By failing to train its employees about the proper procedures for reporting uncontrolled emissions; and

- h. By failing to properly train its employees about the proper procedures for disposing of EtO or its products, including by not limited to ethylene glycol.

86. As a direct and proximate result of one or more of the foregoing acts or omissions, Plaintiff was exposed to and inhaled great amounts of EtO while living in the Willowbrook community.

87. As a direct and proximate result of Plaintiff's inhalation of EtO from the Sterigenics facility, she developed various medical conditions which have caused and will continue to cause Plaintiff to incur and endure medical bills, lost wages, pain and suffering, mental anguish, disability, disfigurement, reduced life expectancy, and loss of normal life.

WHEREFORE Plaintiff, HELEN RAMOS, respectfully requests that judgment be entered in her favor and against Sterigenics U.S., LLC in an amount be determined by a trier of fact.

**COUNT III**  
**Negligent Supervision – Sterigenics U.S., LLC**

88. Plaintiff incorporates by reference all allegations contained in Paragraphs 1 through 73 as if fully set forth herein.

89. Sterigenics U.S., LLC had and continues to have a duty to properly supervise its employees to prevent a creation of danger or harm to third persons.

90. At all relevant times, Sterigenics U.S., LLC knew or should have known that failing to properly supervise its employees in their control, monitoring and disposal hazardous materials including EtO and its by products, including but not

limited to ethylene glycol, would have a toxic, poisonous, and highly deleterious effect upon the health, safety, and well-being of persons breathing it.

91. Sterigenics U.S., LLC breached its duty to supervise its employees in one or more of the following ways:

- a. By failing to recognize when the proper procedures to control and store EtO and its byproducts, including but not limited to ethylene glycol, were violated resulting in unintended leaks, spills or emissions;
- b. By failing to reprimand and/or discipline employees when the proper procedures to control and store EtO and its byproducts, including but not limited to ethylene glycol, were violated resulting in unintended leaks, spills or emissions;
- c. By retaining employees who repeatedly violated the proper procedures to control and store EtO and its byproducts, including but not limited to ethylene glycol, resulting in unintended leaks, spills or emissions;
- d. By failing to recognize when the proper procedures to adequately control, reduce, minimize, and/or mitigate EtO emissions from its Willowbrook facility were violated resulting in unintended leaks, spills, or emissions;
- e. By failing to reprimand and/or discipline employees when the proper procedures to adequately control, reduce, minimize, and/or mitigate EtO emissions from its Willowbrook facility were violated resulting in unintended leaks, spills, or emissions;
- f. By retaining employees who repeatedly violated the proper procedures to adequately control, reduce, minimize, and/or mitigate EtO emissions from its Willowbrook facility resulting in unintended leaks, spills, or emissions;
- g. By failing to recognize when the proper procedures for repairing and/or replacing defective EtO emissions equipment were violated;

- h. By failing to reprimand and/or discipline employees when the proper procedures for repairing and/or replacing defective EtO emissions equipment were violated;
- i. By retaining employees who repeatedly violated the proper procedures for repairing and/or replacing defective EtO emissions equipment;
- j. By failing to recognize when the proper procedures for reporting uncontrolled emissions were violated;
- k. By failing to reprimand and/or discipline employees when the proper procedures for reporting uncontrolled emissions were violated;
- l. By retaining employees who repeatedly violated the proper procedures for reporting uncontrolled emissions;
- m. By failing to recognize when the proper procedures for disposing of EtO or its products, including but not limited to ethylene glycol were violated;
- n. By failing to reprimand and/or discipline employees when the proper procedures for disposing of EtO or its products, including but not limited to ethylene glycol were violated;
- o. By retaining employees who repeatedly violated the proper procedures for disposing of EtO or its products, including but not limited to ethylene glycol;
- p. By failing recognize when the proper procedures to monitor EtO emissions were violated;
- q. By failing to reprimand and/or discipline employee when the proper procedures to monitor EtO emissions were violated;
- r. By retaining employees who repeatedly violated the proper procedures to monitor EtO emissions;
- s. By failing to recognize when the proper procedures for recording EtO emissions were violated;

- t. By failing to reprimand and/or discipline employees when the proper procedures for recording EtO emissions were violated; and
- u. By retaining employees who repeatedly violated the proper procedures for recording EtO emissions.

92. As a direct and proximate result of one or more of the foregoing acts or omissions, Plaintiff was exposed to and inhaled great amounts of EtO while living in the Willowbrook community.

93. As a direct and proximate result of Plaintiff's inhalation of EtO from the Sterigenics facility, she developed various medical conditions which have caused and will continue to cause Plaintiff to incur and endure medical bills, lost wages, pain and suffering, mental anguish, disability, disfigurement, reduced life expectancy, and loss of normal life.

WHEREFORE Plaintiff, HELEN RAMOS, respectfully requests that judgment be entered in her favor and against Sterigenics U.S., LLC in an amount be determined by a trier of fact.

**COUNT IV**  
**Willful and Wanton Conduct – Sterigenics U.S., LLC**

94. Plaintiff incorporates by reference all allegations contained in Paragraphs 1 through 73 as if fully set forth herein.

95. Sterigenics U.S., LLC had and continues to have a duty to refrain from willful and wanton conduct and/or conduct that exhibits an utter indifference and/or conscious disregard to the health, safety, and well-being of Plaintiff and those living and working in the area surrounding Sterigenics Willowbrook facility.

96. At all relevant times, Sterigenics U.S., LLC knew that EtO gas emitting from its Willowbrook facility would have a toxic, poisonous, and highly deleterious effect upon the health, safety, and well-being of persons breathing it.

97. Sterigenics U.S., LLC breached its duty and was guilty of willful and wanton conduct in one or more of the following ways:

- a. By emitting EtO into the air from its Willowbrook facility notwithstanding its knowledge that EtO is toxic, poisonous, and causes adverse medical issues including, but not limited to, cancer;
- b. By placing its own economic interests above the health, safety, and well-being of those who live or work in the Willowbrook community;
- c. By failing to warn or advise Plaintiff, as well as those who live or work in the Willowbrook community, that they were being exposed to EtO notwithstanding its knowledge that EtO is toxic, poisonous, and causes adverse medical issues including, but not limited to, cancer;
- d. By failing to a warn or advise Plaintiff, as well as those who live or work in the Willowbrook community, that they were breathing in EtO notwithstanding its knowledge that EtO is toxic, poisonous, and causes adverse medical issues including, but not limited to, cancer;
- e. By emitting EtO, a known carcinogen, into the air from its Willowbrook facility before fully studying, researching, or understanding the deleterious impact that EtO inhalation exposure has on the health, safety, and well-being of those in the surrounding area;
- f. Deliberately concealing its knowledge concerning the deleterious impact that EtO inhalation exposure has on those who live or work in the Willowbrook community;
- g. By subjecting Plaintiff and those who live and work nearby its Willowbrook facility to an elevated cancer risk without warning them of the same.

98. As a direct and proximate result of one or more of the foregoing acts or omissions, Plaintiff was exposed to and inhaled great amounts of EtO while living in the Willowbrook community.

99. As a direct and proximate result of Plaintiff's inhalation of EtO from the Sterigenics facility, she developed various medical conditions which have caused and will continue to cause Plaintiff to incur and endure medical bills, lost wages, pain and suffering, mental anguish, disability, disfigurement, reduced life expectancy, and loss of normal life.

WHEREFORE Plaintiff, HELEN RAMOS, respectfully requests that judgment be entered in her favor and against Sterigenics U.S., LLC in an amount be determined by a trier of fact.

#### **COUNT V**

#### **Ultrahazardous Activity / Strict Liability – Sterigenics U.S., LLC**

100. Plaintiff incorporates by reference all allegations contained in Paragraphs 1 through 73 as if fully set forth herein.

101. Sterigenics U.S., LLC's use and emission of EtO from its Willowbrook facility constitutes an ultra-hazardous activity.

102. Sterigenics U.S., LLC's use and emission of EtO created a high degree of risk to those who live and work and the surrounding area. Further, the likelihood of cancer caused by its use and emission of EtO is as much as 64 times the level of acceptable risk.

103. Sterigenics U.S., LLC's use and emission of EtO is especially inappropriate given the area in which it is located; namely, within a densely populated residential area, and among schools, municipal buildings, and parks.

104. While the activities conducted by Sterigenics U.S., LLC are exceedingly dangerous, it offers little to no value to the surrounding community.

105. Because the activities of Sterigenics U.S., LLC are ultrahazardous, it is strictly liable for any injuries proximately resulting therefrom.

106. As a direct and proximate result of Sterigenics U.S., LLC's ultrahazardous activities, Plaintiff was exposed to and inhaled great amounts of EtO while living in the Willowbrook community.

107. As a direct and proximate result of Plaintiff's inhalation of EtO from the Sterigenics facility, she developed various medical conditions which have caused and will continue to cause Plaintiff to incur and endure medical bills, lost wages, pain and suffering, mental anguish, disability, disfigurement, reduced life expectancy, and loss of normal life.

WHEREFORE Plaintiff, HELEN RAMOS, respectfully requests that judgment be entered in her favor and against Sterigenics U.S., LLC in an amount be determined by a trier of fact.

**COUNT VI**  
**Civil Battery – Sterigenics U.S., LLC**

108. Plaintiff incorporates by reference all allegations contained in Paragraphs 1 through 73 as if fully set forth herein.

109. At all relevant times, Sterigenics U.S., LLC knew or should have known that the EtO gas emitting from its Willowbrook facility would have a toxic, poisonous, and highly deleterious effect upon the health, safety, and well-being of persons breathing it.

110. Notwithstanding this knowledge, Sterigenics U.S., LLC caused and/or set in motion events that caused EtO to come in contact with Plaintiff.

111. Plaintiff's contact with EtO was offensive and harmful.

112. Sterigenics U.S., LLC intended to emit EtO into the air with knowledge that it would contact those who live and work in the area surrounding its Willowbrook facility.

113. Plaintiff did not consent to contact with EtO emitted from the Sterigenics facility.

114. As a direct and proximate result of Sterigenics U.S., LLC's emission of EtO, Plaintiff were contacted by EtO without his consent and were thereby exposed to and inhaled great amounts of EtO while living in the Willowbrook community.

115. As a direct and proximate result of Plaintiff's inhalation of EtO from the Sterigenics facility, she developed various medical conditions which have caused and will continue to cause Plaintiff to incur and endure medical bills, lost wages, pain and suffering, mental anguish, disability, disfigurement, reduced life expectancy, and loss of normal life.

WHEREFORE Plaintiff, HELEN RAMOS, respectfully requests that judgment be entered in her favor and against Sterigenics U.S., LLC in an amount be determined by a trier of fact.

**COUNT VII**  
**Public Nuisance – Sterigenics U.S., LLC**

116. Plaintiff incorporates by reference all allegations contained in Paragraphs 1 through 73 as if fully set forth herein.

117. The general public has a common right to breathe clean air without dangerous levels of carcinogens such as EtO. The Illinois Constitution guarantees these rights to its citizens. Article XI of the Illinois Constitution of 1970, Environment, Section 1, Public Policy - Legislative Responsibility, provides that:

The public policy of the State and the duty of each person is to provide and maintain a healthful environment for the benefit of this and future generations. The General Assembly shall provide by law for the implementation and enforcement of this public policy.

Article XI of the Illinois Constitution of 1970, Environment, Section 2, Rights of Individuals, provides that:

Each person has the right to a healthful environment. Each person may enforce this right against any party, governmental or private, through appropriate legal proceedings subject to reasonable limitation and regulation as the General Assembly may provide by law.

118. Sterigenics U.S., LLC's use and emission of EtO from its Willowbrook facility substantially and unreasonably infringes upon and/or transgresses this public right. In particular, the activities of Sterigenics U.S., LLC has caused those who live and work in the area surrounding its Willowbrook facility to breathe air containing

high levels of EtO on a routine and constant basis, and further, to be exposed to air causing a substantially elevated risk of cancer.

119. Sterigenics U.S., LLC's use and emission of EtO is especially inappropriate given the area in which it is located; namely, within a densely populated residential area, and among schools, municipal buildings, and parks.

120. As a result of Sterigenics U.S., LLC's use and emission of EtO, Plaintiff was exposed to and inhaled great amounts of EtO while living in the Willowbrook community.

121. As a direct and proximate result of Plaintiff's inhalation of EtO from the Sterigenics facility, she developed various medical conditions which have caused and will continue to cause Plaintiff to incur and endure medical bills, lost wages, pain and suffering, mental anguish, disability, disfigurement, reduced life expectancy, and loss of normal life.

WHEREFORE Plaintiff, HELEN RAMOS, respectfully requests that judgment be entered in her favor and against Sterigenics U.S., LLC in an amount be determined by a trier of fact.

**COUNT IX**  
**Negligence – Bob Novak**

122. Plaintiff incorporates by reference all allegations contained in Paragraphs 1 through 73 as if fully set forth herein.

123. Since August 2003, Bob Novak has been the Operations Manager at the Sterigenics facility in Willowbrook.

124. In that capacity, Bob Novak has been responsible for the operation of the facility, coordinating and overseeing all activities in plant operations, which would include testing and analysis to determine the nature and extent of EtO emissions.

125. At all relevant times, Bob Novak had and continues to have a duty to exercise ordinary care for the health, safety, and well-being of Plaintiff and those living and working in the area surrounding the Sterigenics facility in Willowbrook.

126. At all relevant times, Bob Novak knew or should have known that the EtO gas emitting from the Sterigenics facility in Willowbrook would have a toxic, poisonous, and highly deleterious effect upon the health, safety, and well-being of persons breathing it.

127. Bob Novak breached his duty and failed to exercise ordinary care of the health and well-being of Plaintiff in one or more of the following ways:

- a. Permitting chamber doors to remain open during and/or after the sterilization process and thereby allowing dangerous amounts of ethylene oxide to escape the chamber area in the Sterigenics facility in Willowbrook;
- b. Permitting products that have been sterilized and are still off-gassing to be placed and stored in areas without pollution control and/or adequate ventilation system in the Sterigenics facility in Willowbrook;
- c. Allowing at least six chambers to run at the same time and thereby overloading the vacuum system such that pollution control for one or more chambers was inoperable and/or ineffective in the Sterigenics facility in Willowbrook;
- d. Allowing exterior doors in the warehouse to remain open for unreasonable lengths of time in the Sterigenics facility in Willowbrook;

- e. Failing to timely order and/or replace filters for the dry system and thereby allowing excess amounts of ethylene oxide emissions therefrom in the Sterigenics facility in Willowbrook;
- f. Failing to properly monitor EtO emissions and/or document EtO emissions resulting in an inaccurate report on pollution relating to the Sterigenics facility in Willowbrook;
- g. By failing to employ safe methods to adequately control, reduce, minimize, and/or mitigate EtO emissions from its Willowbrook facility;
- h. By permitting emissions of excessive, unnecessary, and/or dangerous volumes of EtO into air from the Sterigenics facility in Willowbrook; and
- i. By subjecting Plaintiff and those who live and work nearby the Sterigenics facility in Willowbrook to an elevated cancer risk.

128. As a direct and proximate result of one or more of the foregoing acts or omissions, Plaintiff was exposed to and inhaled great amounts of EtO while living in the Willowbrook community.

129. As a direct and proximate result of Plaintiff's inhalation of EtO from the Sterigenics facility, she developed various medical conditions which have caused and will continue to cause Plaintiff to incur and endure medical bills, lost wages, pain and suffering, mental anguish, disability, disfigurement, reduced life expectancy, and loss of normal life.

WHEREFORE Plaintiff, HELEN RAMOS, respectfully requests that judgment be entered in her favor and against Bob Novak in an amount be determined by a trier of fact.

**COUNT X**  
**Willful and Wanton Conduct – Bob Novak**

130. Plaintiff incorporates by reference all allegations contained in Paragraphs 1 through 73 as if fully set forth herein.

131. At all relevant times, Bob Novak had and continues to have a duty to refrain from willful and wanton conduct and/or conduct that exhibits an utter indifference and/or conscious disregard to the health, safety, and well-being of Plaintiff and those living and working in the area surrounding the Sterigenics Willowbrook facility.

132. At all relevant times, Bob Novak knew that EtO gas emitting from the Sterigenics Willowbrook facility would have a toxic, poisonous, and highly deleterious effect upon the health, safety, and well-being of persons breathing it.

133. Bob Novak breached his duty and was guilty of willful and wanton conduct in one or more of the following ways:

- a. By approving test results and/or monitoring systems which provided misleading and inaccurate report on pollution relating to the Sterigenics facility in Willowbrook;
- b. By permitting emissions of EtO into the air from Sterigenics Willowbrook facility notwithstanding his knowledge that EtO is toxic, poisonous, and causes adverse medical issues including, but not limited to, cancer;
- c. By failing to warn or advise Plaintiff, as well as those who live or work in the Willowbrook community, that they were being exposed to EtO notwithstanding his knowledge that EtO is toxic, poisonous, and causes adverse medical issues including, but not limited to, cancer;
- d. By failing to a warn or advise Plaintiff, as well as those who live or work in the Willowbrook community, that they were

breathing in EtO notwithstanding his knowledge that EtO is toxic, poisonous, and causes adverse medical issues including, but not limited to, cancer;

- e. Deliberately concealing his knowledge concerning the deleterious impact that EtO inhalation exposure has on those who live or work in the Willowbrook community;
- f. By subjecting Plaintiff and those who live and work nearby Sterigenics Willowbrook facility to an elevated cancer risk without warning them of the same.

134. As a direct and proximate result of one or more of the foregoing acts or omissions, Plaintiff was exposed to and inhaled great amounts of EtO while living in the Willowbrook community.

135. As a direct and proximate result of Plaintiff's inhalation of EtO from the Sterigenics facility, she developed various medical conditions which have caused and will continue to cause Plaintiff to incur and endure medical bills, lost wages, pain and suffering, mental anguish, disability, disfigurement, reduced life expectancy, and loss of normal life.

WHEREFORE Plaintiff, HELEN RAMOS, respectfully requests that judgment be entered in her favor and against Bob Novak in an amount to be determined by a trier of fact.

**COUNT XI**  
**Negligence – Roger Clark**

136. Plaintiff incorporates by reference all allegations contained in Paragraphs 1 through 73 as if fully set forth herein.

137. Roger Clark was the Maintenance Supervisor at the Sterigenics facility in Willowbrook from the late 1980s until approximately 2015.

138. In that capacity, Roger Clark was responsible for calibrating the internal EtO monitors and overseeing the sterilization process at the Sterigenics facility in Willowbrook.

139. At all relevant times, Roger Clark had a duty to exercise ordinary care for the health, safety, and well-being of Plaintiff and those living and working in the area surrounding the Sterigenics facility in Willowbrook.

140. At all relevant times, Roger Clark knew or should have known that the EtO gas emitting from the Sterigenics facility in Willowbrook would have a toxic, poisonous, and highly deleterious effect upon the health, safety, and well-being of persons breathing it.

141. Roger Clark breached his duty and failed to exercise ordinary care of the health and well-being of Plaintiff in one or more of the following ways:

- a. Inaccurately calibrating internal EtO monitors to allow for erroneous monitoring results;
- b. Failing to properly monitor EtO emissions and/or document EtO emissions resulting in an inaccurate report on pollution relating to the Sterigenics facility in Willowbrook;
- c. Permitting chamber doors to remain open during and/or after the sterilization process and thereby allowing dangerous amounts of ethylene oxide to escape the chamber area in the Sterigenics facility in Willowbrook;
- d. Permitting products that have been sterilized and are still off-gassing to be placed and stored in areas without pollution control and/or adequate ventilation system in the Sterigenics facility in Willowbrook;
- e. Allowing at least six chambers to run at the same time and thereby overloading the vacuum system such that pollution

control for one or more chambers was inoperable and/or ineffective in the Sterigenics facility in Willowbrook;

- f. Allowing exterior doors in the warehouse to remain open for unreasonable lengths of time in the Sterigenics facility in Willowbrook;
- g. Failing to timely order and/or replace filters for the dry system and thereby allowing excess amounts of ethylene oxide emissions therefrom in the Sterigenics facility in Willowbrook;
- h. By failing to employ safe methods to adequately control, reduce, minimize, and/or mitigate EtO emissions from its Willowbrook facility;
- i. By permitting emissions of excessive, unnecessary, and/or dangerous volumes of EtO into air from the Sterigenics facility in Willowbrook; and
- j. By subjecting Plaintiff and those who live and work nearby the Sterigenics facility in Willowbrook to an elevated cancer risk.

142. As a direct and proximate result of one or more of the foregoing acts or omissions, Plaintiff was exposed to and inhaled great amounts of EtO while living in the Willowbrook community.

143. As a direct and proximate result of Plaintiff's inhalation of EtO from the Sterigenics facility, she developed various medical conditions which have caused and will continue to cause Plaintiff to incur and endure medical bills, lost wages, pain and suffering, mental anguish, disability, disfigurement, reduced life expectancy, and loss of normal life.

WHEREFORE Plaintiff, HELEN RAMOS, respectfully requests that judgment be entered in her favor and against Roger Clark an amount be determined by a trier of fact.

**COUNT XII**  
**Willful and Wanton Conduct – Roger Clark**

144. Plaintiff incorporates by reference all allegations contained in Paragraphs 1 through 73 as if fully set forth herein.

145. At all relevant times, Roger Clark had a duty to refrain from willful and wanton conduct and/or conduct that exhibits an utter indifference and/or conscious disregard to the health, safety, and well-being of Plaintiff and those living and working in the area surrounding Sterigenics Willowbrook facility.

146. At all relevant times, Roger Clark knew that EtO gas emitting from the Sterigenics Willowbrook facility would have a toxic, poisonous, and highly deleterious effect upon the health, safety, and well-being of persons breathing it.

147. Roger Clark breached his duty and was guilty of willful and wanton conduct in one or more of the following ways:

- a. By deliberately falsifying test results and/or inaccurately calibrating monitoring systems to provide a misleading and inaccurate report on pollution relating to the Sterigenics facility in Willowbrook;
- b. By permitting emissions of EtO into the air from Sterigenics Willowbrook facility notwithstanding his knowledge that EtO is toxic, poisonous, and causes adverse medical issues including, but not limited to, cancer;
- c. By failing to warn or advise Plaintiff, as well as those who live or work in the Willowbrook community, that they were being exposed to EtO notwithstanding his knowledge that EtO is toxic, poisonous, and causes adverse medical issues including, but not limited to, cancer;
- d. By failing to a warn or advise Plaintiff, as well as those who live or work in the Willowbrook community, that they were breathing in EtO notwithstanding his knowledge that EtO is

toxic, poisonous, and causes adverse medical issues including, but not limited to, cancer;

- e. Deliberately concealing his knowledge concerning the deleterious impact that EtO inhalation exposure has on those who live or work in the Willowbrook community;
- f. By subjecting Plaintiff and those who live and work nearby Sterigenics Willowbrook facility to an elevated cancer risk without warning them of the same.

148. As a direct and proximate result of one or more of the foregoing acts or omissions, Plaintiff was exposed to and inhaled great amounts of EtO while living in the Willowbrook community.

149. As a direct and proximate result of Plaintiff's inhalation of EtO from the Sterigenics facility, she developed various medical conditions which have caused and will continue to cause Plaintiff to incur and endure medical bills, lost wages, pain and suffering, mental anguish, disability, disfigurement, reduced life expectancy, and a loss of his normal life.

WHEREFORE Plaintiff, HELEN RAMOS, respectfully requests that judgment be entered in her favor and against Roger Clark an amount be determined by a trier of fact.

**COUNT XIII**  
**Negligence – GTCR, LLC**

150. Plaintiff incorporates by reference all allegations contained in Paragraphs 1 through 73 as if fully set forth herein.

151. GTCR, LLC owned and operated the Sterigenics facility in Willowbrook, Illinois, during a material portion of time since 2011.

152. Sterigenics U.S., LLC managed, controlled, and supervised sterilization operations at the Sterigenics facility in Willowbrook, Illinois, during a material portion of time since 1984.

153. GTCR, LLC had and continues to have a duty to exercise ordinary care for the health, safety, and well-being of Plaintiff and those living and working in the area surrounding its Willowbrook facility.

154. At all relevant times, GTCR, LLC knew or should have known that the EtO gas emitting from its Willowbrook facility would have a toxic, poisonous, and highly deleterious effect upon the health, safety, and well-being of persons breathing it.

155. GTCR, LLC breached its duty and failed to exercise ordinary care of the health and well-being of Plaintiff in one or more of the following ways:

- a. By emitting EtO into the air from its Willowbrook facility;
- b. By emitting excessive, unnecessary, and/or dangerous volumes of EtO into air from its Willowbrook facility;
- c. By using EtO as part of its sterilization process when safer alternatives could accomplish the same or similar business purpose without presenting the same level of risk to human health and well-being;
- d. By placing its own economic interests above the health and well-being of those who live or work in the Willowbrook community;
- e. By failing to warn or advise Plaintiff, as well as those who live or work in the Willowbrook community, that they were being exposed to EtO;

- f. By failing to warn or advise Plaintiff, as well as those who live or work in the Willowbrook community, that they were breathing in EtO;
- g. By failing to warn or advise Plaintiff, as well as those who live or work in the Willowbrook community, that it was emitting a known carcinogen into the air from its facility in Willowbrook;
- h. By failing to employ safe methods to adequately control, reduce, minimize, and/or mitigate EtO emissions from its Willowbrook facility;
- i. By failing to adequately study and test the effect of its EtO emissions from its Willowbrook facility on the quality of air;
- j. By failing to adequately study and test the effect of its EtO emissions from its Willowbrook facility on the health and well-being of those who live and work in the Willowbrook community; and
- k. By subjecting Plaintiff and those who live and work nearby its Willowbrook facility to an elevated cancer risk.

156. As a direct and proximate result of one or more of the foregoing acts or omissions, Plaintiff was exposed to and inhaled great amounts of EtO while living in the Willowbrook community.

157. As a direct and proximate result of Plaintiff's inhalation of EtO from the Sterigenics facility, she developed various medical conditions which have caused and will continue to cause Plaintiff to incur and endure medical bills, lost wages, pain and suffering, mental anguish, disability, disfigurement, reduced life expectancy, and loss of normal life.

WHEREFORE Plaintiff, HELEN RAMOS, respectfully requests that judgment be entered in her favor and against GTCR, LLC in an amount to be determined by a trier of fact.

**COUNT XIV**  
**Willful and Wanton Conduct – GTCR, LLC**

158. Plaintiff incorporates by reference all allegations contained in Paragraphs 1 through 73 as if fully set forth herein.

159. At all relevant times, GTCR, LLC had and continues to have a duty to refrain from willful and wanton conduct and/or conduct that exhibits an utter indifference and/or conscious disregard to the health, safety, and well-being of Plaintiff and those living and working in the area surrounding Sterigenics Willowbrook facility.

160. At all relevant times, GTCR, LLC knew that EtO gas emitting from the Sterigenics Willowbrook facility would have a toxic, poisonous, and highly deleterious effect upon the health, safety, and well-being of persons breathing it.

161. GTCR, LLC breached its duty and was guilty of willful and wanton conduct in one or more of the following ways:

- a. By permitting emissions of EtO into the air from Sterigenics Willowbrook facility notwithstanding his knowledge that EtO is toxic, poisonous, and causes adverse medical issues including, but not limited to, cancer;
- b. By failing to warn or advise Plaintiff, as well as those who live or work in the Willowbrook community, that they were being exposed to EtO notwithstanding his knowledge that EtO is toxic, poisonous, and causes adverse medical issues including, but not limited to, cancer;
- c. By failing to a warn or advise Plaintiff, as well as those who live or work in the Willowbrook community, that they were breathing in EtO notwithstanding his knowledge that EtO is toxic, poisonous, and causes adverse medical issues including, but not limited to, cancer;

- d. By permitting emissions of EtO, a known carcinogen, into the air from its Willowbrook facility before fully studying, researching, or understanding the deleterious impact that EtO inhalation exposure has on the health, safety, and well-being of those in the surrounding area;
- e. Deliberately concealing his knowledge concerning the deleterious impact that EtO inhalation exposure has on those who live or work in the Willowbrook community;
- f. By subjecting Plaintiff and those who live and work nearby Sterigenics Willowbrook facility to an elevated cancer risk without warning them of the same.

162. As a direct and proximate result of one or more of the foregoing acts or omissions, Plaintiff was exposed to and inhaled great amounts of EtO while living in the Willowbrook community.

163. As a direct and proximate result of Plaintiff's inhalation of EtO from the Sterigenics facility, she developed various medical conditions which have caused and will continue to cause Plaintiff to incur and endure medical bills, lost wages, pain and suffering, mental anguish, disability, disfigurement, reduced life expectancy, and loss of normal life.

WHEREFORE Plaintiff, HELEN RAMOS, respectfully requests that judgment be entered in her favor and against GTCR, LLC in an amount to be determined by a trier of fact.

**COUNT XV**  
**Ultrahazardous Activity / Strict Liability – GTCR, LLC**

164. Plaintiff incorporates by reference all allegations contained in Paragraphs 1 through 73 as if fully set forth herein.

165. GTCR, LLC's use and emission of EtO from its Willowbrook facility constitutes an ultra-hazardous activity.

166. GTCR, LLC's use and emission of EtO created a high degree of risk to those who live and work and the surrounding area. Further, the likelihood of cancer caused by its use and emission of EtO is as much as 64 times the level of acceptable risk.

167. GTCR, LLC's use and emission of EtO is especially inappropriate given the area in which it is located; namely, within a densely populated residential area, and among schools, municipal buildings, and parks.

168. While the activities conducted by GTCR, LLC are exceedingly dangerous, it offers little to no value to the surrounding community.

169. Because the activities of GTCR, LLC are ultrahazardous, it is strictly liable for any injuries proximately resulting therefrom.

170. As a direct and proximate result of GTCR, LLC's ultrahazardous activities, Plaintiff was exposed to and inhaled great amounts of EtO while living in the Willowbrook community.

171. As a direct and proximate result of Plaintiff's inhalation of EtO from the Sterigenics facility, she developed various medical conditions which have caused and will continue to cause Plaintiff to incur and endure medical bills, lost wages, pain and suffering, mental anguish, disability, disfigurement, reduced life expectancy, and loss of normal life.

WHEREFORE Plaintiff, HELEN RAMOS, respectfully requests that judgment be entered in her favor and against GTCR, LLC in an amount be determined by a trier of fact.

**COUNT XVI**  
**Civil Battery – GTCR, LLC**

172. Plaintiff incorporates by reference all allegations contained in Paragraphs 1 through 73 as if fully set forth herein.

173. At all relevant times, GTCR, LLC knew or should have known that the EtO gas emitting from its Willowbrook facility would have a toxic, poisonous, and highly deleterious effect upon the health, safety, and well-being of persons breathing it.

174. Notwithstanding this knowledge, GTCR, LLC caused and/or set in motion events that caused EtO to come in contact with Plaintiff.

175. Plaintiff's contact with EtO was offensive and harmful.

176. GTCR, LLC intended to emit EtO into the air with knowledge that it would contact those who live and work in the area surrounding its Willowbrook facility.

177. Plaintiff did not consent to contact with EtO emitted from the Sterigenics facility.

178. As a direct and proximate result of GTCR, LLC's emission of EtO, Plaintiff were contacted by EtO without his consent and was thereby exposed to and inhaled great amounts of EtO while living in the Willowbrook community.

179. As a direct and proximate result of Plaintiff's inhalation of EtO from the Sterigenics facility, she developed various medical conditions which have caused and will continue to cause Plaintiff to incur and endure medical bills, lost wages, pain and suffering, mental anguish, disability, disfigurement, reduced life expectancy, and a loss of his normal life.

WHEREFORE Plaintiff, HELEN RAMOS, respectfully requests that judgment be entered in her favor and against GTCR, LLC in an amount be determined by a trier of fact.

**COUNT XVII**  
**Public Nuisance – GTCR, LLC**

180. Plaintiff incorporates by reference all allegations contained in Paragraphs 1 through 73 as if fully set forth herein.

181. The general public has a common right to breathe clean air without dangerous levels of carcinogens such as EtO.

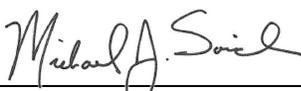
182. GTCR, LLC's use and emission of EtO from its Willowbrook facility substantially and unreasonably infringes upon and/or transgresses this public right. In particular, the activities of Sterigenics U.S., LLC has caused those who live and work in the area surrounding its Willowbrook facility to breathe air containing high levels of EtO on a routine and constant basis, and further, to be exposed to air causing a substantially elevated risk of cancer.

183. GTCR, LLC's use and emission of EtO is especially inappropriate given the area in which it is located; namely, within a densely populated residential area, and among schools, municipal buildings, and parks.

184. As a result of GTCR, LLC's use and emission of EtO, Plaintiff was exposed to and inhaled great amounts of EtO while living in the Willowbrook community.

185. As a direct and proximate result of Plaintiff's inhalation of EtO from the Sterigenics facility, she developed various medical conditions which have caused and will continue to cause Plaintiff to incur and endure medical bills, lost wages, pain and suffering, mental anguish, disability, disfigurement, reduced life expectancy, and a loss of his normal life.

WHEREFORE Plaintiff, HELEN RAMOS, respectfully requests that judgment be entered in her favor and against GTCR, LLC in an amount to be determined by a trier of fact.

  
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